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RECENT PROGRESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Philippines*

The genuine interest which is felt by at least a small section of the American public in the future of the Philippines, and in the present solution of the problem of America's relation to the Islands is seen in the constant inquiry which comes from thoughtful Americans the country over: "What progress is being made by Filipinos? Are they succeeding in establishing a stable government? Are they showing capacity for managing their own affairs?" These questions are sincerely put by many of those who ask them, and when thus put, they are worthy of an equally sincere reply. In order to afford that reply, it is, however, necessary to know exactly what is meant. If the answers to the questions are to be more than alarmist declarations on the one hand or soothing assurances on the other, it must be stated exactly what we mean when we speak of progress, stable government, and national capacity. This at once opens a very wide field of thought. It raises questions to which no adequate or satisfactory answer has been afforded. For a long time past, it has been customary to discuss the Philippine question in the language of cant and hypocrisy, and to seek to apply to it standards which have no, or only a very remote, bearing upon the situation. I make this statement at the outset in order that I may not be misunderstood in what I shall have to say and in the presentation of facts that I am about to make. I am particularly anxious that it shall not be assumed by any that I accept the standards of progress for the Philippines that

have been proposed, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether directly or indirectly, by insincere or thoughtless speakers who have expressed themselves upon insular questions.

I

I will begin, however, by assuming that what is desired first of all is a discussion of progress in the Philippine Islands from an American standpoint, and that what it is desired to know is the extent of the progress that has been made since the inauguration of the Philippine policy of the present administration as regards government, economic affairs, and national and social development. Let us start with the question of government. In the year 1907, the American rulers of the Philippines, acting in accordance with the provisions of the Philippine civil government act, brought into existence the Philippine Assembly, a legislative body intended to represent the people of the Islands and to act as a lower house of legislature, the Philippine Commission, with its minority of Filipinos, acting as the upper. It is a well-known fact that this Assembly in its earlier years was regarded as a highly creditable and efficient body, measured by standards of western civilization and governmental method. The fact that it was so, was attested by former President Taft, then Secretary of War, by many members of Congress, by non-partisan observers, as well as by politicians with their own axes to grind. In fact, too much was said of the efficient and satisfactory quality of the Philippine Assembly. It became an article of party faith in the United States to show that the Assembly had worked well because of the fact that it had been created by a certain political party, and must therefore be held to justify the expectations and predictions of those who had established it. The simple fact in the case was that, had the Assembly been in truth what its fulsome admirers said it was, it would not have been a very serviceable or useful body. Had it continued to be docile, not to say subservient, merely meeting the political desires and wants of those who had created it, in order that it might be

used as a pawn in their political game, it would not have been a body in which any native Filipino could fairly feel pride. The fact that it was a genuine governmental agency was evidenced by the fact that as soon as its members had gained experience in the methods they were to follow and had squarely before them the public questions with which they were to deal, they began to be somewhat restive. They felt that the Philippine Commission, with its great body of subordinate foreign office-holders, receiving salaries which to native minds seemed utterly exorbitant, was not managing affairs in the public interest. They were disturbed at the apparent inability to reduce the amount of money paid to foreigners, at the bad distribution of appropriations, and at the lack of satisfactory legislation on economic topics. It was upon these grounds that the Assembly for three years in succession refused to pass the budget recommended to it by the Philippine Commission acting as the Upper House of Legislature, and it was because of this refusal to grant the increasing exactions of the foreign office-holders in the Islands that the Assembly was constantly denounced as a recalcitrant and inefficient body and that efforts were made to demonstrate to the American public that it had been a failure.

President Wilson, upon the advent of his administration, took up the Philippine question for very thoughtful study, and determined that the difficulty did not lie in too much "native government," but in too little. Without waiting for legislation by Congress, he took a step placed within his power by the Philippine organic act. He determined to name a majority of Filipinos as members of the Commission, and in so doing he placed the control of both branches of the legislative department of the Philippine government in the hands of the inhabitants of the Islands. It is true that the Filipinos thus named as members of the Commission were appointed by him and were not elected by the people, but his choices were satisfactory to the rank and file of the population, and the result, therefore, was to give the control of their own legislative body to the inhabitants in a very real sense. I have shown that the Philip-

pine Assembly had already demonstrated its capacity by refusing to become a mere tool in the hands of a group of foreign autocrats. So the House of Commons acted during the critical early years when the establishment of English self-government was in the balance. So every self-governing nation has demanded that its legislative representatives should act. A different kind of test was, however, to be imposed upon the representatives of the Filipino people upon the advent of the new regime in the Philippines in October, 1913. Could the newly constituted legislative body do constructive work? Could it deal successfully with the problems presented to it? I do not care, writing in a scientific journal, to pass too hastily upon either of these questions, however strongly I may entertain opinions and beliefs. Little more than one year has elapsed since the beginning of the new era. What I can say with confidence is that that year has been conspicuously successful and has produced results which would be held by any standards to be eminently satisfactory.

When Governor General Harrison, who had been named by President Wilson to succeed former Governor General Forbes, reached the Philippines, he found a serious threat of financial disaster in the Islands. The Insular government had been brought to the brink of bankruptcy. I can best describe the situation which existed there in the words of Governor General Harrison himself, who in his first message to the Philippine Legislature said:

The most pressing need of the hour is economy in the public expenditures. This matter, in my opinion, is the most important question now affecting the success and welfare of this Government. Based upon the estimates of probable receipts and expenditures for the current fiscal year, as published by the auditor, it is probable that the Government, without the adoption of a drastic program of economy is face to face with a deficit of about four and a half million pesos.

From June 30, 1908, when the surplus in the insular treasury was 17,499,894.97 pesos, the surplus has fallen as of June 30, 1913, to 14,230,220.23 pesos. Of this sum, however, about 5,000,000 pesos is only nominally available, it being invested in supplies and having been carried to the surplus account in 1911, thus leaving an actual cash surplus in hand at the conclusion of the last fiscal year of only about 9,000,000 pesos.

This shrinkage in the available surplus of the Government has come about notwithstanding the fact that during this period of four years the sum of 6,000,000 pesos has been obtained by the sale of an issue of public works bonds, and expended out of the treasury, and notwithstanding the further fact that a little less than 3,500,000 pesos from the gold standard fund has during this period passed through the treasury in the same way.

At the present rate the auditor on June 30, 1913, estimated that the current expenditures of this Government would exceed the income by about 2,000,000 pesos in the course of the fiscal year. In this connection it is fair to say that the insular collector of customs, in making his estimate to the auditor, properly discounted the fact that owing to the limited importation of rice the custom revenues would fall, and they actually have fallen in the first two months about 1,600,000 pesos. It is also fair to state that the estimates made at the same time by the collector of internal revenue were probably exaggerated when he predicted an increase of about 1,000,000 pesos in internal revenue; in any event it is certain that this expected increase has not only failed to materialize thus far, but that we are actually running behind the internal revenue receipts of the preceding fiscal year in a sum which for the first three months has exceeded 100,000 pesos. This decrease may possibly be offset by the collection of the new income tax.

While it is possible that the income from customs may improve somewhat from the present date, approximately 3,000,000 pesos may be figured as the probable deficit based upon the ordinary income and expenditure of the government for the present year. To this we must add the sum of 1,500,000 pesos of which the treasury is to be deprived in the balance of the current year by the passage of the Underwood tariff bill, which removes the tax upon exports.

These words of Governor Harrison were not exaggerated. It was for the new government to attempt to remedy the state of things they indicated. The subject was at once taken in hand and substantial economies were effected. A revised budget was prepared and adopted and thereby a saving of over one million and a half dollars in current expenses annually was brought about. Governor General Harrison was able at the end of his first session's work with the Philippine legislature to review the work done in terms of the utmost satisfaction and to give the legislature the highest encomium for its industry, diligence, and ability. His opinion in this regard has been echoed by reliable witnesses of every shade of political opinion, and today

there is a general, if in some quarters unwilling, agreement that the new government of the Islands has been wholly successful, and that the fears expressed by professionally pessimistic persons at the outset were baseless.

These were not idle words of compliment. Their truth has been amply attested since the time they were uttered by many different observers, although to those who knew Mr. Harrison and his motives no such attestation was necessary. Persons who are interested in knowing how far Filipinos were responsible for the work thus accomplished should remember that this was done during a period when no American commissioners were present in the Islands with the sole exception of Governor General Harrison, who had then just arrived. It is no detraction from the high quality of Mr. Harrison's leadership to say that the successes which he has so generously recognized were the product of Filipino effort and Filipino determination to improve governmental conditions.

Nor was the improvement in the situation entirely confined to financial affairs. In the following table prepared by a capable journalistic observer resident in the Islands is given a digested summary of exactly what has been accomplished.

	SESSIONS			
	1910-11	1911-12	1912-13	1913-14
Bills introduced in commission.....	63	69	71	103
Bills passed by commission.....	48	52	61	69
Commission bills enacted by legislature.....	17	17	18	50
Bills introduced in assembly.....	484	518	421	398
Bills passed by assembly.....	98	181	131	169
Assembly bills enacted by legislature.....	33	69	51	51
Percentage of commission bills enacted by legislature.....	35	25	30	72
Percentage of assembly bills enacted by legislature.....	34	38	39	30
Percentage of bills passed by either house enacted by legislature.....	34	37	36	42

The same observer in commenting upon this showing says:

It will be seen that whereas the percentage of bills passed by the assembly and enacted by the legislature fell from 39 last year to 30 for this year's session, the percentage of commission bills passed by the legislature rose from 30 to 72.

The decrease in the number of assembly bills enacted was largely due to the fact that the extraordinary labors involved in the framing in the general appropriation bill resulted in the holding over of a great many bills in the lower house without action. Moreover, due to the renaissance of the national spirit, there was more activity in the lower house in the matter of framing bills and more initiative in the presentation of measures. Then, the commission was very cautious in its consideration of bills arising in the lower house, and brought its superior wisdom and experience to bear on measures arising there. It thus performed its intended function as a check upon the more youthful and exuberant spirits of the assembly.

On the other hand, the unbounded confidence of the assembly in the commission, a new condition in Philippine legislation, is demonstrated by the fact that 72 per cent of bills passed in the upper house were approved by the lower chamber. Compare this figure with the 30, 25, and 35 of the three previous years.

During the last session 101 bills were enacted into law. For the three previous years the figures are 69, 86, and 50.

In the session of 1910-11, outside of a "negotiable instruments" act, a bill for the reorganization of the justice of the peace courts, and a bill granting a gas franchise for the city of Manila, no important measures were enacted. In the following session the most important laws passed were an act permitting the utilization of the "gold standard and reserve" fund for public-works loans to Provinces and municipalities; a warehouse-receipt act, governing the use of this class of business documents; an automobile law, fixing speed limits, etc.; and an act providing for systematic government inspection of the municipal police forces in the islands. This latter law was never enforced for lack of appropriation. During the session of 1912-13 the only important laws enacted were a bill providing for the registration of patents, a law regulating the practice of veterinary medicine, and a bill appropriating funds for a portion of the cadastral survey of the islands.

I should not of course attempt to conceal the fact that what has been done has been received with the utmost hostility and criticism, not to say execration, by those who were affected by it. The charge was made that wholesale dismissals of American officials were occurring and that incompetent Filipinos were being substituted for trained and experienced foreigners. I regret to say that these assertions, founded although they were upon no evidence of the

slightest trustworthiness, were accepted as if true and were given currency by supposedly reputable journals apparently eager to prove their hypothesis that the slightest relaxation of autocracy in the Islands would be followed by nepotism, incompetence, and political favoritism.

Secretary of War Garrison, in responding to this and other such attacks, has stated the situation clearly and concisely in answer to questions put to him by a trusted interviewer; and I cannot do better than to cite his words:

Question. Have there been any unusual dismissals of American employees under the Harrison administration?

Answer. No; the number of dismissals has not been unusual. It has increased slightly, due to necessary retrenchment. The number, however, is not one-half of what it was in years like 1903 and 1904, nor so great as it was in 1905 and 1906, when there was an effort at retrenchment.

Question. What is there in the charge that the civil service rules have been disregarded? How many Americans, all told, has Gov. Harrison taken out to the Philippines and put into positions there?

Answer. Not a single instance has been brought to my attention where it was charged that Gov. Harrison had disregarded civil service rules. Fewer Americans have been taken to the islands during Gov. Gen. Harrison's administration than during any similar period in recent years.

Of Americans coming from the United States since his arrival he has appointed the collector of customs, one member of the municipal board of the city of Manila, and one member of the public utilities commission.

Question. What are the important positions to which the Governor General might, if he so desired, appoint his American political friends?

Answer. First, the chiefs of bureaus of the Government, of which there are about 22. Second, the judges of first instance in the islands, of which there are 36. All of these judicial positions have been filled by appointment since Gov. Harrison arrived in the islands. Third, miscellaneous appointments, such as the members of the municipal board of the city of Manila, governor of the department of Mindanao and Sulu, and members of the public utilities commission.

Question. Now, Mr. Secretary, in how many of these has the Governor actually appointed Americans brought by him from the United States?

Answer. Of the heads of the bureaus of the Philippine Government Gov. Harrison appointed one—the collector of customs—from the United States—Dr. Herstein. Dr. Herstein

had been an employee of the United States civil service for some years. He was a tariff expert employed in the framing of the recent United States tariff. His politics are not known to me.

He appointed, as a member of the municipal board of the city of Manila, Dr. Fitzsimmons, who had served in the islands formerly.

He appointed, as a member of the public utilities commission, Stephen Bonsal, a well-known American newspaper and literary man.

He reappointed every judge of first instance on the bench, and in filling the remaining vacancies he selected two Americans, one of whom had been long in the service of the islands and one who had been in the islands only a short time in the civil service, but had previously been in the civil service of the United States.

Question. What basis is there for the statement that business is disorganized in the islands and that the economic conditions are upset?

Answer. About as much basis as there is for such a statement with reference to the United States. It is perfectly well known to anyone who is searching for the truth that there has been a world-wide business depression, and that while in particular communities this depression may have been enhanced or mitigated by local conditions, this has only been in the matter of degree. In the Philippines, due to the exclusively agricultural basis of business, this depression has been least. Unquestionably, some business men wished to know the course that this administration purposed to pursue before they embarked in any extension of their business enterprises. But to suggest seriously that there has been any panicky condition produced in the Philippines by anything that this Government has done or left undone is simply to state that which has not the basis of truth.

I think it is not the least of the achievements of the Filipino people and of their legislative body that in spite of every kind of misrepresentation and attack, they have continued steadfastly on their way, advancing in the policies which they have mapped out for themselves, not terrified by vicious criticism or by the fear of losing the greater powers that have been extended to them, and on the other hand, never seeking to retaliate upon those who had subjected them to aspersion and abuse, nor allowing themselves to be led into any excesses. They have been steady, faithful and determined.

In economic affairs, the Islands have had to endure their share of the losses and difficulties consequent upon the European war just as has been true of every other portion

of the world. In some particulars, they have suffered with exceptional severity, such articles as copra being deprived of almost their entire market. This, however—it is to be hoped, at least—is a temporary condition. The activity and energy of the people have been stimulated by the prospect of better government, and instead of a retrograde movement in commerce or agriculture, which has been predicted by professional pessimists at the outset of the new regime, there had, prior to the present temporary troubles due to war, been a marked advance, as the following official figures will show:

The fiscal year 1912, i.e., the year ending June 30, 1912, was, measured by the total of imports, the most prosperous year up to that time in the history of the Philippines. The total imports were \$54,549,980. But the dark spot was that of this total \$10,519,949 was rice, the result of an unusually disastrous failure of the Philippine rice crop.

In the fiscal year 1913 the total imports showed an increase over the preceding year to \$56,327,583, though the imports of rice were but \$7,940,857.

The reports of Philippine commerce have now been received to include the month of May, 1914. I give the following from the records for purposes of comparison:

Total imports for 11 months ending May, 1912.....	\$48,522,580
Total imports for 11 months ending May, 1913	51,543,134
Total for 11 months ending May, 1914.	50,876,025

For the same periods, omitting rice:

1912.....	\$39,731,895
1913.....	43,825,329
1914.....	48,395,180

Of the total during these three periods there were from the United States:

1912.....	\$18,560,805
1913.....	23,130,695
1914.....	25,752,233

In the face of this it is idle to talk of depression or lack of confidence.

Throughout the whole period, during which these transformations have been occurring, there has been profound

peace in the Islands. The native force, the constabulary, is amply able to take care of all police duty, and except for mere practice marches there is little for American soldiers and officers stationed in the Philippines to do. The Philippines are a peaceful, agricultural country, thoroughly and growingly able to manage their own affairs, keenly desirous of doing so, and hopefully awaiting the time when the United States will fulfill the many promises and assurances furnished by American statesmen that such a condition of self-control will be established. I might enlarge upon the continued and promising advance in education in the Philippines, but so much has been said upon that subject that it scarcely seems necessary to repeat what is already a twice-told tale.

II

It would seem that the Philippine Islands have in every respect lived up to occidental standards of stability in government and advancement in popular welfare, and that during that time that they have had an increased control over their own affairs they have shown both the ability and the intention to increase and advance the beneficial elements of their civilization whether of native origin or of foreign importation. Such is in fact the case. I wish, however, at this point, to dissent entirely, as indicated at the outset of this discussion, from the view of the Philippine problem which will admit no evidence of advancement except that which is gauged by conditions in the United States. The Filipinos are a people of Oriental habits and types of mind, resident in the tropics, and subject to their own conditions of life and industry. It seems to me to expect them to emulate the United States in all particulars is a gross perversion of the teaching of human experience or of any sound political philosophy. Many of the conditions which exist in the United States today are not ideal, but even when they are so, they are the product of many years of labor and development intended to result in the better provision of social justice and equity between man and man. They are intended to meet the peculiar needs of a highly

industrialized society with a structure totally different from that which is found in any Eastern country. I think that the thoughtful student of race development must feel that it is far better that a nation should evolve its own type of culture and of government and should follow its own instincts in selecting a path toward the attainment of a higher civilization than that it should be made a slavish imitator of any other country or group of countries however elevated may be the civilization of the latter. I would go further than this and say that even if such a nation did not do as well in the initial stages of self-government as it might do with foreign preceptors, nevertheless the slower and less perfect progress was the more solid and stable, and therefore vastly to be preferred.

As I have said in another connection: I question most seriously the statement that any nation can successfully direct the course of development that must be followed by another. The education of the individual is most successful when it affords the best vehicle for self-expression; the education of the nation or the race proceeds most naturally as a matter of internal evolution. Mistakes may be made, and when made they bring their own penalty. Now as always, it is true that experience is the best teacher, and that only by endeavoring, aspiring, and striving can a government attain to practical efficiency. That has been conspicuously the history of the Anglo-Saxon race. Magna Charta was not bestowed by some friendly conqueror, but was the product of long years of struggle and effort. American constitutional government was not the gift of Howe, Cornwallis, or the King of England. Is there not a way of national progress from within, as compared with that stimulated from without, that hasty thinkers seem sometimes to overlook? Are we mindful of the fact that the one priceless advantage of self-development is that it proceeds along the proper lines, in accord with the tendencies, peculiarities, and special abilities of the people; in other words, that it is always a natural growth, while progress imposed from without may result in an unnatural type of evolution?

Without being overcritical, let me speak of this matter

frankly. It is a fact that the work of Americans in the Philippines has not been as free from errors as the former officials of the Philippine Government in their self-laudation would have us believe. There have been mistakes—mistakes that were very expensive to the Filipino taxpayers; there have been injustices and wrongs. Some things have been overdone and other things have been neglected. I do not, however, on that account underrate the value of that work as a whole, and I gladly reiterate that considering all the circumstances Americans have done marvels. No government of men is free from shortcomings. I only wish to note the fact that some of the mistakes which their representatives have made in the Philippines, because of their unfamiliarity with the people and the country, would not have been made by Filipinos acting for themselves.

I do not believe that either the Filipinos or any other Eastern people, if left to themselves, would either reject or be unable to assimilate western civilization. Quite the contrary. We have the example of Japan, and China herself is beginning to furnish another illustration of the same sort. Japan, without falling under the rule of another nation, nevertheless made marvelous progress within a short time. If it be remembered that when Japan began her development she was much less familiar with occidental civilization than were we when we sought to organize our own government, it would seem apparent that we should have made at least the same advance. When Japan decided that in order to live she must adopt modern and occidental methods, she knew absolutely nothing of their technique, and yet how brief a time did she require to adopt those methods and even to surpass some of the older powers? What was it that Japan did? She sent her sons throughout the world to acquire learning, and occidental instruction; she brought to her land men who could teach every branch of human knowledge and who could help to organize a modern government. Would anyone pretend to say that because of this foreign help Japan's was not a process of self-development and progress? Why can Filipinos not accomplish, by using the same means, what

Japan has accomplished? Who can say that Japan would have made as much progress had she fallen under a foreign yoke?

The Filipinos are showing that they are amply capable of taking over and assimilating the beneficial ideas of western nations, adapting them to their own use, fitting them to the needs of their peculiar situation and drawing intellectual sustenance therefrom. This has been the history of successful civilizations everywhere. They have not advanced by a process of mental inbreeding, but by a process of crossing themselves intellectually with the best strains they could find, the world over. It is not progress, but just the reverse, if a nation be compelled to confine itself to imitation of another and if it be debarred from selecting useful elements of civilization, education, social custom and government wherever it can find them throughout the world. I refuse to test the progress of Filipinos by the extent to which they have adopted American customs, law, and civilization, whether in their desirable or in their undesirable aspects. It is a sign of progress that they have succeeded in assimilating so rapidly those elements of civilization and of thought in which America stands conspicuous. This does not mean that for the future they should be debarred from following any other models. Least of all does it signify that whenever there is a departure from American practice such departure should afford the basis for bitter criticism. In the fundamentals of civilized life and thought, Filipinos, considering the opportunities they have had, the character of their preceptors, the nature of their surroundings, have done conspicuously well. The seed planted in the Islands, whether indigenous or whether brought there from Spanish, American or other sources, has not fallen upon stony ground, but has brought forth many fold, particularly since the inhabitants have been permitted to cultivate it. It should continue to do so, and that such will be the case is convincingly attested by the accelerated advance in all good things that has been realized since the inhabitants were given the power and responsibility to govern themselves in some measure, and were made to feel the responsibility for such mistakes of temper, judgment or policy as they might commit.